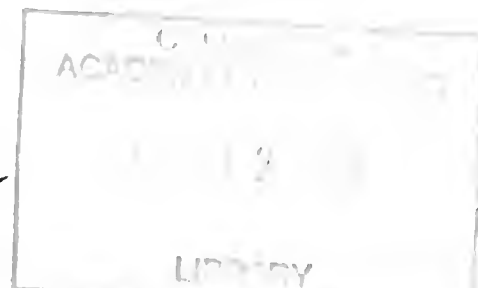


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# The Gull



Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter  
Volume 77 • No. 4 April 1995

## Governor Wilson Launches All-Out Attack on Endangered Species

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Birds of Chile  
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Governor Pete Wilson, in what appears to be a shocking example of political cynicism, is using a natural disaster as an excuse to gut environmental protection regulations. In response to the latest floods, the governor has suspended the California Endangered Species Act (CESA), supposedly to help farmers "quickly rebuild their lives and not have to worry about satisfying some obscure state requirements..." Sadly, Wilson evidently considers the extinction of a species and the extinguishing of thousands of years of evolution just an obscure, unimportant event. Going even further, the governor has, through the Calif. Department of Fish and Game, issued a permit that would allow "all persons and public agencies" to kill threatened and endangered species "to prevent or mitigate an emergency or natural disaster." This permit is good until the year 2000.

For several years, Governor Wilson has led an attack on the ESA. When fires wracked Southern California, Governor Wilson blamed the endangered Stephens Kangaroo Rat for the destruction of homes. It was claimed that the presence of brush (habitat for the kangaroo rat) was responsible for the spread of those fires. The U. S. General Accounting Office later did a study focusing on this accusation and concluded that the federal Endangered Species Act played no role in the spreading of the fire which was already so intense when it reached the area near the homes that an absence of brush would have made no difference.

Now, blame for the Pajaro River flooding is being placed on an endangered salamander. Local residents claim that the salamander's presence prevented channel clearing that would have allowed water to flow through the river more quickly. Fish and Game officials counter that no salamanders have been found for 6 years and that permits had been given for the channel clearing, but Monterey and Santa Cruz counties simply did not have the money to pay for the desired dredging.

Governor Wilson, using this disinformation as a weapon, has attacked the California Endangered Species Act itself. By allowing state and local officials to ignore the Act in order to prevent "emergencies," the Endangered Species Act is essentially nullified.

Want to change a stream into a concrete channel in order to make room for your development project, but there are endangered amphibians and fish in the stream? Well, just get your local official to declare that if the stream floods there will be an emergency, the CESA is nullified, and the stream disappears into a concrete culvert. Want to build a shopping mall on a seasonal wetland and the California ESA poses a problem? Well, declare the seasonal wetland a possible flood hazard and presto, no California Endangered Species Act to protect that wetland. Is there an endangered species in the way of your development in Southern California? Declare that coastal scrub habitat a fire hazard and away goes the CESA. Is there a state-listed endangered species stopping your timber harvest? Declare a fire hazard and away you go. Bye-bye CESA.

You get the point. Governor Wilson's action devastates California's Endangered Species Act. But you can do something about it!! Please write, call, or fax him and tell him how outraged you are over his actions. Tell him to retract the permit. Tell him that the Endangered Species Act is a good and necessary environmental law. A short, one page letter, or a two minute phone call is all it takes. Please don't let this opportunity to speak out for nature go by. Our state's future is in all of our hands. Let's be worthy of it.

**Governor Pete Wilson  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814**

**phone # 916-445-2843  
fax # 916-445-4633**

## CHICKADEE CLUB

In the most recent issue of the American Birding Association publication, *Birding*, an anonymous correspondent complains about the treatment that novice birders often receive at the hands of veterans. Anonymous writes, "It seems silly [to even consider] encouraging children and teenagers when too many birders ... do not respect anyone they feel is below their level."

While I don't doubt that there are birders who are intolerant, it has been my experience that birders are usually happy to share their knowledge and their time. The Chickadee Club at Jefferson Elementary School in Berkeley is a case in point.

Last summer my wife and I visited Scotland and England for five weeks, she to visit elegant manor houses, I to scope out the surrounding hedgerows for Dunnocks and Stonechats. I spent a certain amount of my waking hours fretfully concerned with developing the thrust of the Jefferson science program for the Fall. Come September, I would be confronted with 350 eager children in grades K-3. What to do with them?

The answer came atop a craggy peak in the Lake District. My wife and I had hiked to a small pond (called Red Tarn for some arcane reason) and were catching our breath. Near us was an English family eating their lunch in the lee of a large, grey, granite boulder. It was a typical overcast and cold August day with a sharp wind which promised rain. The youngest member of the family who sat near us was a lively young girl of eight or nine who couldn't stay still long enough to finish her cheese and crackers. She was continually running off to discover new secrets in the heather or to explore the muddy edges of the pond. During a rare lull in her activity, I heard a bird call from about twenty yards away - a soft kwip-kwip. I called the girl's attention to the sound and we both tried to find out what kind of bird was calling from the jumble of rocks in front of us. She was immediately quiet and attentive. She waited patiently while the unknown bird took its time in showing itself. Occasionally we would see the dark crown of its head as it foraged in the scree. Always we could hear



*John Poole and Chickadee Club members, parents and GGAS volunteers spying out interesting life along the waterfront.*

its lonely call. Over the space of ten minutes or more, the girl never lost her focus. Her parents lost interest and began to pack up to resume their hike. But the girl still watched for the bird, following it with her eyes and ears until, in its own good time, it hopped up on a rock in plain view. It was a pretty bird with a short black bill, a black-edged white crescent on its breast and a warm russet belly. The girl was easily as excited as I was over this Eurasian Dotterel. It is not an uncommon bird in mountainous areas of northern Britain, but it is strikingly colored. I explained to the girl that here was a species in which the female was more colorful than the male, and we talked about protective coloration and the uneven roles that the parent birds assumed in raising their young. She didn't want to leave as long as the little dotterel kept her position on the rock. Finally, however, she said her goodbyes and thank-yous and scrambled off to join the rest of her family.

That short interlude with girl and crags and dotterel was the genesis of the Chickadee Club. The girl had been entranced. She had made the most of the encounter and had learned a few facts about the life of a small mountain bird. I believe that the experience will be filed away by her along with other childhood memories. It may even assume some importance in her life.

My aim when I started the Chickadee Club at Jefferson School was to try to replicate that experience as many times as

possible. It was not to create a new cadre of life-long birders. It was to offer some children the opportunity to store up a magical memory or two, to set the stage for the possibility of enchantment.

Teachers, when they are faithful to their calling, facilitate those moments. They lead the child to things which are wonderful. They enter into the process as catalysts, leaving few of their own tracks as the child discovers new and delightful things about the world.

And what of the anonymous writer to *Birding* who decries the poor elitists among us? I would like that writer to meet the GGAS Chapter volunteers who have become Saturday morning teachers of children.

The Jefferson Elementary School Chickadee Club now has 141 members between the ages of five and nine. Seventy of these children (and their parents) have spent a Saturday morning in Tilden Park or on the Berkeley Marina learning that there is more to birds than Big Bird or Roadrunner.

The Jefferson Chickadee Club is a pilot program. We are experimenting with various ways of introducing children to wilderness and wild things. As we refine our approach, we will offer the program as a package to other elementary schools. This all depends, of course, on the number of volunteers who can put the lie to the complaints of "Anonymous" and who are willing to share the joy of birding.

*John Poole*

# News from around the Bay

## AUDUBON CANYON RANCH

The Marin hills are green with fresh grasses and leaves, the product of our wonderfully wet winter. Wildflowers bloom in open fields and beneath oaks and redwoods. Birds wing from deep riparian cover and from tree-top snags. Egrets guard blue eggs which will soon hatch young to join their great blue cousins.

Our trails are open and inviting. Consider a three-mile hike which teases you to discover as many as half-a-dozen habitats and perhaps as many micro-climates. Struggle a little up a grassy hillside as red-tails, Turkey Vultures, ravens and swallows course above on a carpet of air. Listen at a seasonal stream: the flow of water over rocks and deadfalls, a Winter Wren's prolonged melody, the breeze-tousled leaves, the gentle tapping of a foraging nuthatch or the shattering drumming of a territorial Pileated Woodpecker. Look down at a columbine or touch the orange flower of a mimulus to see it close before your eyes. A garter snake won't evade your careful watch.

This is the Ranch and so much more. Pack your picnic lunch, your binoculars, field guides and a notebook and visit this very special place. April marks a beginning for the wonders nature offers in our area. Enjoy those wonders with us at Audubon Canyon Ranch. By May, the moment will have passed and new wonders will have taken their place until the cycle is repeated next year.

### New Docents at ACR

Forty-seven enthusiastic new docents have graduated in the class of '95 at the Bolinas Lagoon Preserve. They have completed the 23-week training program, and by now they have guided their first groups of school children. Congratulations to each of our new docents who are now full-fledged members of that incredible group of volunteers who make Audubon Canyon Ranch's education program a national model for excellence.

## Guided Nature Walks at BAP

Our schedule of half-day, docent-guided walks at the Bouverie Audubon Preserve in Glen Ellen is set. Spring is incredible in the Sonoma hills. Between the nesting birds and the spring wildflowers, this is a walk you don't want to miss. Our dates for these free walks are April 1 and 15, and May 5 and 27. Reservations are taken at the beginning of the month preceding the trip by calling (707) 938-4554.

### Upcoming Seminars

"Spring Workday at Cypress Grove Preserve," with John Kelly and the ACR staff, Saturday, April 29.

"The Ecology of Herons & Egrets" at Bolinas Lagoon Preserve, Saturday, May 20 (\$10 individual/\$20 family of 4 or fewer).

*Call (415) 868-9422 for further information and for registration.*

*Dan Murphy*

## HAWK-WATCH VOLUNTEERS

If you are interested in learning to identify the hawks, falcons, and eagles of California *and* in becoming part of a long-term wildlife conservation project, then the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory (GGRO) wants you! Come attend one of the 1995 GGRO Orientation Meetings on Thursday, May 11, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. *or* on Saturday, May 13, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Both programs will be held at GGNRA Headquarters, Building 201, Upper Fort Mason, San Francisco. Enter at Franklin and Bay.

GGRO is a group of more than 230 volunteers dedicated to tracking and monitoring the autumn flight of 19 species of birds of prey over the Marin Headlands. We are currently seeking new volunteers for our 1995 class who can commit one day every two weeks from August through December, 1995, along with some weekend and evening trainings in July.

*For more information, please call the GGRO, (415) 331-0730.*

## SIERRA SENIORS SUMMER PROGRAM

Feather River College, located near Quincy in Plumas County, announces its Sierra Seniors program for 1995. Seniors 55 years and up will stay in apartments on the campus, eat in the college dininghall, and attend classes and field trips on the following subjects: Spring Flora and Birds in the Sierra Nevada; Forty-niner Gold Rush and Local History; and Maidu and Yahi Indians and Ishi.

This year's Sierra Seniors program will be held June 18 to 24. Round-trip transportation on a school bus from the Bay area is included. The total cost is \$390.00. This includes meals, apartment, classes, field trips, and round-trip bus transportation.

Our program's philosophy is, "You're never too old to learn and to enjoy social camaraderie in a scenic mountain environment." There are no tests and no homework.

Call Eleanor Schuller at (510) 530-1128 for a brochure or for further details.

## GOLDEN TROUT FAMILY CAMP

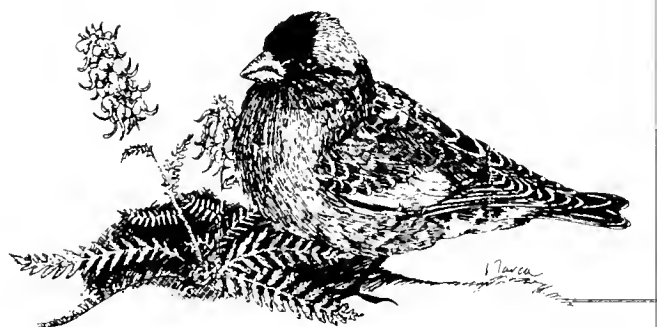
Imagine waking up on a beautiful summer morning to the sounds of birds singing, the creek running, and the smell of fresh coffee drifting into your tent-cabin. Time to rise, dress, and wander over to the heated cabin where your delicious breakfast awaits you. Then, after you pack your lunch, you head off with your experienced naturalist on one of the myriad trails that run through this country. After a day of lush wildflower-filled meadows, mountain lakes, tumbling waterfalls, vistas of 14,000-foot mountains which you're welcome to climb, you head back to camp where, after a solar-powered shower, you sit down to another scrumptious dinner. Then, perhaps, an informal talk on the history of the camp, or a game of cards, maybe some singing, and if the sky is right some star-gazing. Last year a group of people camped out

under the stars to watch the shooting-star extravaganza that occurs in the August skies.

This is all available this summer at Golden Trout Camp located in the eastern Sierra, south of Mt. Whitney. Cost of a 6-day session: \$225 per adult; \$150 per 5-13 year-old child. Space is limited to about 20 guests and sessions begin July 30, August 6, and August 13. The workshops were Audubon-sponsored for 20 years, but beginning this year, the camp has become an independent non-profit organization.

For further information, contact: Golden Trout Natural History Workshop, c/o Cindi McKernan, 1230 Friar Lane, Redlands, CA 92373, (909) 798-3060 or Carolyn Kolka at (510) 549-0411.

*Carolyn Kolka*



## MOTHERS' DAY BBQ

Marin Audubon hosts its 40th Annual Mothers' Day Barbeque at Volunteer Canyon at Audubon Canyon Ranch on Sunday, May 14th at 2 PM (tables available at 11). Chicken (freshly bbq'd), homestyle baked beans, vegetarian quiche, salad, beverages, and light dessert will be served in this serene setting overlooking Bolinas Lagoon. Proceeds will benefit the educational programs at Audubon Canyon Ranch and Marin Audubon Society.

For information and reservations, call (415) 663-8361.

## TRICOLORED BLACKBIRD COUNTS

California Department of Fish and Game, the Tricolored Blackbird Working Group, and Western Regional Office of National Audubon are coordinating statewide counts of Tricolored Blackbirds on the weekends of April 22-23 and May 20-21, 1995. The counts are an attempt to determine overall numbers of Tricolored Blackbirds, the size and location of their nesting colonies, and their foraging areas.

Volunteers interested in participating should contact Bob Barnes, (916) 481-5332, FAX (916)481-6228.



## GIFTS AND BEQUESTS

### for GGAS

Eunice Andersen, Janet Anderson, Carla Arakaki, Maria Baird, Martha Baker, Stanley and Mary Baker, Hubert and Jean Barnes, Judith Barnes, Ellen and Gunther Barth, Willa K. Baum, John and Elsie Becker, Mary Jane Beddow and Stephen Hahn, Jonathan and Patricia Benjamin, Edward and Mildred Bennett, Walter and Nancy Berger, Jack Bertges, Cecil Blank, Diane Breivis, Mobert and Nancy Brewer, Marcia Brockbank, Terence Broyer, Michael and Rita Carey, James Clayton, Helen R. Cline, Steven Cochrane and Lisa Frost, Afton Crooks, Janette and John Dang, Adrienne DeBisschop, Mark Delventhal, David Donnenfield, Ruth Doty, Joseph Driskill and L. J. Bryant, Robert Erickson, Athalia and Peter Esty, Leora Feeney, Daniel Feldman and Emily Roberson, Monica Fletcher and Stephen Evans, Maryanne Flett, Joel Fontaine, Cornelia Foster, Rachel Freifeld, JoAnne Frudden, Albert Gerald Fryling, Patricia Gannon, Frances Genger, Maruice and Virginia Gerritsen, Wilma and Albert Ghorso, Grace and John Gildersleeve III, Arlene Giordano, Clark H. Gleason, Ruth and James Gravanis, Nanine Greene, Rupert Grimm, Arthur and Kristi Haigh, Carlyn Halde, Travis Hale, William Hamm, Alan Harper, Mary Ellen Harte, Virginia Havens, Trudis Heinecke, Robert Hodas, M. D. Hoog, Richard and Theresa Horrigan, Eugenia Hull, Marion A. Hyde, Nancy Jackman, Martha Killebrew, Anne Kroeger, Louise LaBrash,

Elizabeth Lamb, Elizabeth Land, James and Lynn Larkin, Mary K. Lesoganich, Jean and Harry Levin, Toni and William Link, Luther and Virginia Linkhart, James and Eileen Ludwig, D. B. Luten, Janet Mandelstam, Janet Mangini, L. E. and Emily Mannion, Sylvia McLaughlin, Gabriella Molnar, Mignonet Montez, Jane Moorman, June Naboisek, Robert and Esther Oswalt, Peradam Foundation, Susan Peters, Kurt Peterson, James Post, Mauricia Price, Kathryn and R. J. Riddell, Elizabeth Rieger, Evelyn Risedorph, Donald and Barbara Rivenes, Carl and Elizabeth Roseberg, Laury Rosenthal, Siobhan L. Ruck, Lawrence and Meike Sacks, Ernest and Patricia Saunders, Russell Scalf, A. H. and Elizabeth Schaaf, Joyce and James Schnobrich, Edith Scovil, Maggie and Contee Seely, Virginia Sherwood, W. E. and J. B. Siri, John Skinner, Alan and Patricia Smith, Elizabeth and Clifford Sojourner, Jacklyn and Joseph Sort, Theodora Spear, Jack K. Stewart, Nick Story, Lynn Strandberg, Sylvia L. Sykora, Susan and Lawrence Szabo, Stephen and Dolores Taller, Mary Ann Thompson, Mary Turner, Daisy Uyeda, Evelyn Van Orsdel, Cynthia Voytek, Harold and Cecile Weaver, Ann White, Richard Winger, John and Olive Zane, Margaret and Maurice Zeff, Katherine and Stuart Zimmerman

### for Bay Area Wetlands Conservation

Douglas and Laverne Leach Charitable Foundation

### for Papageno Project

Marcia Grand

### in honor of Meg Pauletich

Orinda Valley Garden Club

### in honor of Joe Morlan

Jane Dang

### in memory of Mrs. Jack Dohrmann

Mrs. William L. Shattuck

### for the Bird Box in memory of Ruth Voss

Jane Dang, Violet Ehrhardt, Diana and Dan Foster, Grace and John Gildersleeve III, Jack Goodman, Diane Ichiyasu, Wilma and Carl Jordan, Bruce and Isabel Kennedy, Sally Levinson and Douglas Daniels, Fran Tompakov, Anne Warburton, Leonie Wohlberg

### for the Bird Box

Emilie Strauss

The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor, or if unspecified, at the discretion of GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use for general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society including Audubon Canyon Ranch of which GGAS is a sponsor. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in The Gull as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.



## EVOLUTION EXAMINED: A BOOK REVIEW

*The Beak of the Finch: A Story of Evolution in Our Time* by Jonathan Weiner, illustrations by K. Thalia Grant, New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1994. 334 pages with black-and-white illustrations throughout. \$25.00 (hardcover).

When Charles Darwin first set foot on Chatham Island (the island is now named San Cristobal by the Ecuadorean government), the easternmost large island of the Galapagos Archipelago, he was not favorably impressed by his surroundings. "Nothing could be less inviting than the first appearance," he wrote in his journal, later published in *The Voyage of The Beagle*. Darwin, then a mere 26 years old, had left his native England nearly four long years earlier, on December 27, 1831, to serve as a naturalist aboard the H.M.S. "Beagle," and, more importantly, to provide companionship at the appropriate social level for the ship's young aristocratic and temperamental captain, Robert FitzRoy. What Darwin learned over the course of his five-year voyage was enough to inspire thoughts that would culminate almost a quarter of a century later in *The Origin of Species*, a book that would change all of biology, to say nothing of western philosophy. But on September 17, 1835, Chatham Island looked foreboding, a remote, arid, black volcanic island where even the stark, leafless palo santo trees seem to emit a foul odor. Little

***These finches . . . are, quite simply, the Rosetta Stone of organic evolution***

wonder that young Darwin paid scant attention to the nearly tame little brown and black birds that abounded on the island. But Darwin's insatiable curiosity soon got the better of him, and he began to notice the extraordinary uniqueness of the Galapagos flora and fauna. In describing the land birds that tenanted the islands, he discussed what he termed "a most singular group of finches, related to each other in the structure of their beaks, short tails, form of body, and plumage."

These finches were intriguing. Some had very large, powerful, nutcrackerlike bills, similar to those on grosbeaks. Some had more moderate seed-crushing bills, such as are found on various sparrows. One species had a thin, forcepslike bill, like that of a warbler. Yet, in spite of the differences in bill characteristics, all the finches otherwise bore compelling similarities to one another. As Darwin wrote, "Seeing this gradation and diversity of structure in one small, intimately-related group of birds, one might really fancy that from an original paucity of birds in this archipelago, one species had been taken and modified for different ends." He collected study skins (as did Captain FitzRoy, who was also somewhat intrigued by the finches), and, upon returning to England, learned from the prominent British ornithologist John Gould that there were actually thirteen species of finches on the Galapagos (the thirteen species that Gould named are not precisely those identified as species today). More importantly, thanks in large part to Gould's analysis of the finches, Darwin became quickly convinced that the thirteen species were not separately created, but instead arose from a common ancestor, what he later termed "descent with modification." These finches, which eventually came to be known as Darwin's finches, are, quite simply, the Rosetta Stone of organic evolution.

Following Darwin's epiphany, little scientific study of the finches was made until British ornithologist David Lack's landmark work (1947) that not only formally christened the birds "Darwin's finches," but also suggested how competition among species could act as a powerful force in affecting evolutionary change, an insight responsible for much subsequent ecological research throughout the next several decades.

Today, research on Darwin's finches is more active than ever. For the past two decades teams of researchers from Princeton University, under the leadership of Peter and Rosemary Grant, have made meticulous studies of Darwin's finches, especially on the island of Daphne Major. Their studies have confirmed in the finest detail that Darwin's principal mechanism for evolution, natural selection, is real. It

works, and often with frightening efficiency. If Nobel Prizes were awarded in the field of evolutionary biology, there would be little doubt that the Grants' research would make them strong candidates. *The Beak of the Finch* is a timely account of the voluminous research conducted by the Grants and their colleagues and students. The author, Jonathan Weiner, was apparently granted total access to the Grants, their field stations, and their laboratories at Princeton. Weiner skillfully describes in layman terms just what natural selection is and how the changing fortunes and misfortunes of several species of Darwin's finches have served to demonstrate both the reality as well as the power of natural selection.

***The rapidity with which bill characteristics can evolve would surprise even Darwin.***

The title of the book is taken from the fact that natural selection works particularly strongly on bill characteristics among the finches, because bills are so critical to food acquisition. The beaks change, sometimes increasing in size, sometimes decreasing, in direct response to changing patterns of rainfall abundance as it affects plants and the seeds they produce. Evolutionary change occurs over generations, just as Darwin hypothesized, by a process of differential reproduction: in drought years large-billed birds survive better than small-billed birds, because the larger billed individuals can crack the hard seeds that are essentially the only ones available during times of extreme water shortage. These survivors reproduce, so genes that make larger bills proportionally increase in the next generation, a result of the survival of the fittest. But in wet years, large-billed birds have no particular advantage, and may even be disadvantaged, resulting in differential survival and reproduction of smaller-billed birds. Natural selection is opportunistic, acting on the moment. The rapidity with which bill characteristics can evolve would surprise even Darwin. Natural selection is

**(Beak of the Finch, cont.)**

no weak force.

The Grants know all this because they know every single finch on Daphne Major. Each bird has been individually marked with combinations of leg bands. Similarly, each bird's parents and grandparents and great grandparents are known because all of those were individually marked. Thus far, nearly 19,000 birds have been banded over the long course of the research, representing uninterrupted data from about two dozen generations of finches. The Grants, unlike Darwin, are not confined to talking in terms of what evolution could or might do. They talk in terms of what it is doing and has done and continues to do. Their vast computer banks of numbers have translated Darwin's Rosetta Stone into spreadsheets and graphs that abundantly confirm his theory as well as add to it.

Weiner not only explains the Grants' elaborate research, but puts it in appropriate historical perspective by weaving Darwin's ideas throughout the book. In addition, Weiner makes appropriate comparisons with research being done by the Grants' contemporaries. There is a nice balance of history and modern biology juxtaposed throughout the book. The reader gets to know Darwin as well as the Grants. Birders may develop a new respect for domestic pigeons knowing that Darwin used pigeon breeds to show the power of selection (in this case artificial selection), arguing convincingly that even the most exotic-looking domestic pigeon breeds each originated from a common ancestor, the Rock Dove, an example Darwin described in detail in the first chapter of *The Origin of Species*. Throughout the book, Weiner provides excellent examples of modern evolutionary research. For instance, Weiner describes the rapid evolution of pesticide resistance in a species of moth that severely damages cotton crops. The irony of the fact that this moth, the very paradigm of Darwinian natural selection, lives and wreaks its havoc in the southern "Bible Belt," an area dominated by creationists, most of whom would prefer that evolution not be taught, is not lost on Weiner. This book is one of the best introductions to evolutionary biology

currently available. It ranks with Richard Dawkins' *The Blind Watchmaker*, Edward O. Wilson's *The Diversity of Life*, and the various books by Stephen Jay Gould for overall information content and clarity of writing.

No, this is not strictly a bird book. It will not even tell you how to identify the finches. But birders think a lot about what defines a species and how species form in nature, and thus they can learn much from this book. Most of it is, after all, about birds, one small group of them, that provided the kindling that started an intellectual fire that rapidly became a conflagration. Sure, you can spend your money and go to Brazil or east Africa and see many more bird species than you will on the Galapagos. But you won't see the finches -- THE finches.

**John C. Kricher**

John C. Kricher, Jennings Professor of Biology, Wheaton College, Norton, Massachusetts, is the author of *Neotropical Companion*; *Field Guide to Eastern Forests*; and *Field Guide to the Ecology of Western Forests*. He is currently at work on a book about the natural history of the Galapagos Islands that will be published by the Smithsonian Institution Press

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## PANAMA COMMITTEE

### Focus on Projects

The February 13th meeting of PanCom, the GGAS Panama Committee, was an inspiration to the nine members gathered at the home of Miles and Mary Ellen McKey. We heard the latest news about our sister organization, Sociedad Audubon de Panama, presented by Bob Barnes, Birds in the Balance Program Coordinator for the Western Regional Audubon in Sacramento.

Mr. Barnes spent part of January in Latin America and visited with President Norita Scott Peget and other members of her board to explore how we can best help them further the goals of the Sociedad. The chapter was originally started by European and North American birders living in Panama, but board membership

is now about 70 percent Panamanian. They have established an office staffed part time and look forward to working with us in a variety of ways.

There are several interesting partnership arrangements that GGAS can forge with Panama that Mr. Barnes suggested based on his exploration. PanCom members will be evaluating and shaping these ideas, as summarized below, in future meetings.

- Audubon Adventures outreach to Panamanian school children could be sponsored by GGAS using the new Spanish translation of Robert Ridgley's *Birds of Panama*. Our fundraising efforts might provide copies of the book for distribution to classrooms with a coordinated program of presentations and birding trips.

- Book and binocular donations coordinated through commercial outlets here could be focused on Panama and expanded to the general population in small towns there with Audubon support of a public relations campaign.

- Annual International Bird Festival held in October in Panama City coinciding with the hawk migration over a weekend will be organized for the third year this fall. Over 1,000 Panamanians attended the 1994 festival and GGAS could contribute to that event in many ways.

- In-country birding tours and participation in Panama's annual Christmas count may be ways to both inform our members of Panama's needs and of the dangers of over-development and deforestation, and raise funds for chapter activities.

- California Dept. of Fish and Game's Wings Across the Borders program, where school children form friendships and exchange information about nature, could be explored for possible partnering with GGAS efforts.

Panama Committee meetings are held the third Monday of every month.

The next meeting will be April 17th at 7:30 p.m. Call Miles or May Ellen McKey for details at (510) 652-5854.

**Corinne Stefanick**

# Field Trips Calendar

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*For complete write-ups on field trips scheduled through April 12, see The Gull for March.*

## **Saturday, April 1**

### **Bodega Bay**

Meet at 9 a.m. at the intersection of Hwy. 1 and East Shore Rd. in Bodega Bay. Bring lunch. Leader: Nancy Conzett (707) 875-2231.

## **Sunday, April 2**

### **Hayward Regional Shoreline**

Meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot at the Visitors' Center, west end of Breakwater Rd. (Half-day trip). Leader: Rusty Scalf (510) 523-7108.

## **Saturday, April 8**

### **Point Reyes National Seashore**

Meet at 8 a.m. at the Bovine Bakery on Rte. 1 in downtown Point Reyes Station. Bring lunch. Leaders: Lina Jane Prairie and Neil Whitehouse (510) 526-7025.

## **Sunday, April 9**

### **Bothe-Napa Valley State Park**

Meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot. (Park is on Hwy. 29 north of St. Helena, just beyond the Bale Grist Mill State Park.) Bring lunch. Leader: Peter Allen (415) 892-2910.

## **Wednesday, April 12**

### **Mini-trip to Sunol Regional Park**

Meet at 9 a.m. at the Ranger Station parking lot. Bring lunch. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

## **Saturday, April 15**

### **Redwood Park, Oakland**

Meet in the park at 8:30 a.m. Take the Warren Freeway (Hwy. 13) and exit onto Redwood Rd. Go east about three miles to Redwood Gate, southern entrance to the park. Meet just inside small parking lot on the left. We will be looking for migrants and breeding birds, with emphasis on learning their songs and calls. Lunch is optional for the half-day trip. Leader: Cin-ty Lee (510) 486-0673. (\*)

## **Sunday, April 16**

### **Golden Gate Park**

Traditional Easter walk. We will meet at 9:30 a.m. at 43rd Avenue and Fulton Street near North Lake (Chain of Lakes) for a walk around the various lakes in the vicinity. There is a variety of waterfowl and songbirds to be seen, and at least two species of hummingbirds. Optional: after the walk, we will have a champagne brunch (approx. \$15) at nearby Thiggy's Restaurant in Lincoln Park (reservations not required). Leader: Mike Healy (415) 664-3654.

## **Saturday, April 22**

### **Point Reyes National Seashore**

Seventh Annual All-day Spring Birding Blitz. (Joint activity: GGAS/National Park Service). Meet at 8 a.m. at Five Brooks Trailhead parking lot, approximately 3.5 miles south of Olema on the west side of Hwy. 1. We will bird Five Brooks Pond Area, Limantour Spit, Drakes Beach, Chimney Rock and Point Reyes, ending at Bear Valley for a multi-habitat trip. Bring water, food, and layer clothes for variable weather. Leaders: Leon Abrams (415) 453-9980 (work), (510) 843-4107 (home), and Cathy Purchis (510) 865-9482 (\*).

## **Sunday, April 23**

### **Leona Heights Open Space, Oakland** (not to be confused with Leona Heights Park)

Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot. Take I-580 south about 1.5 miles beyond the junction with Warren Frwy. (Hwy. 13) to the Keller exit. Go east (uphill) on Keller .8 miles, passing a yellow with white trim shopping complex on the right. Turn left onto Campus Drive, then a quick right onto Canyon Oaks Dr. (This seems like turning into a private parking lot for the Ridgemont Condominium Complex - gray-brown buildings with white trim.) Once in the parking area, go left to the end. and you'll find the small East Bay Regional Parks District parking lot.

We will be hiking a riparian habitat in a woodland canyon, and will return to the parking lot on the same trail. Those who wish to extend the hike in pursuit of a Rufous-crowned Sparrow should bring a lunch. Leader: Rusty Scalf (510) 523-7108. (\*)

## **Sunday, April 23**

### **Briones Regional Park**

For this half-day trip, meet at 9 a.m. at the west entrance to Briones Regional Park, off Bear Creek Rd.. Meet in the parking area on the left, just beyond the fee booth.

Directions: Take Hwy. 24 and exit on the Orinda turnoff. Turn left and go back under the freeway on Camino Pablo. Continue northwest about two miles to Bear Creek Rd. Turn right and go about 4.5 miles to Briones Regional Park entrance on the right (just beyond Happy Valley Rd.). Or, from Berkeley area, cross through Tilden Regional Park on Wildcat Canyon Rd. and continue beyond Inspiration Point. Cross San Pablo Dam Rd. onto Bear Creek Rd., and continue 4.5 miles to the park.

We will be looking for resident birds and early migrants. Leader: David George (510) 339-0765. \$ (\*).

## **Saturday, May 6**

### **Sunol Regional Park**

Meet at 8:30 a.m. inside the park entrance at the parking lot on the left. Take I-680 south, turn off at Calaveras Rd. (the freeway sign is marked: Calaveras Rd., Dumbarton Bridge, Calif. 84). Go south (left) and follow the signs to Sunol Regional Park.

*(cont. on page 40)*

about five miles. Bring lunch and liquids in preparation for a four to five mile walk. We expect to see a variety of the common breeding birds, including flycatchers, vireos, and warblers. Leaders: Gloria Markowitz and Ken Ackerman (415) 892-2910. \$ (\*)

#### **Sunday, May 7**

##### **Wildcat Canyon Regional Park**

Meet at 8 a.m. by the Arlington Clubhouse on Arlington Blvd. (next to the tennis courts between Brewster Dr. and Thors Bay Rd.) in El Cerrito. From there we will make a short drive to the trailhead on Rifle Range Rd.

We will encounter hills as we walk a transect of the canyon to bird in brushlands, oak woodlands, riparian stream-sides and grasslands. We anticipate seeing a few late migrants and a good representation of nesting birds including Grasshopper Sparrows and Lazuli Buntings. We will also identify common trees of the area. People with allergies should be aware that we will encounter grassy conditions. Bring lunch and liquids for a six-mile hike. The trip will end at 2 p.m. Leader: Malcolm Sproul (510) 376-8945. (\*)

#### **Wednesday, May 10**

##### **Mini-trip to Briones Regional Park**

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the west entrance to Briones Regional Park off Bear Creek Rd. Meet in the parking area on the left just beyond the fee booth.

(Directions: see field trip above scheduled for Briones Regional Park on Sunday, April 23.)

We should see Northern Orioles, Lark Sparrows, Ash-throated Flycatchers and Lazuli Buntings. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301, and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

#### **Saturday, May 13**

##### **Briones Regional Park - Birding by Ear**

Meet at 8 a.m. at the west entrance to Briones Regional Park off Bear Creek Rd. Meet in the parking area on the left, just beyond the fee booth.

(Directions: see field trip above scheduled for Briones Regional Park on Sunday, April 23.)

Be prepared to hike five miles through hilly terrain. Bring lunch and liquids, a hat and sunscreen. We will study the

songs and calls of common breeding birds of the East Bay. Leader: Dave Cornman. (510) 825-2106. \$ (\*)

#### **Saturday, May 20**

##### **Bouverie Audubon Preserve (near Glen Ellen)**

This 400-acre preserve is known for its flowering plants (over 350 species) as well as 100 bird species.

This trip is by reservation only. Reservations must be received (mail or telephone) by May 16th.

Bouverie Audubon Preserve

P.O. Box 1195

Glen Ellen, CA 95442

Telephone: (707) 938-4554

Directions and information about meeting time and place will be mailed to participants.

#### **Plan Ahead:**

#### **Friday-Sunday, June 2-4**

##### **Yosemite National Park**

Birding by Ear. Leader: Dave Cornman. (510) 825-2106

#### **Saturday-Sunday, June 17-18**

##### **Yuba Pass**

Leader: Peter Allen. (415) 892-8063

#### **Friday-Sunday, June 23-25**

##### **Lassen Volcanic National Park**

Leaders: Dan and Joan Murphy. (415) 564-0074

#### **Thursday-Sunday, July 6-9**

##### **Backpacking Trip to Snag Lake,**

##### **Lassen Volcanic National Park**

Leaders: David Rice (510) 527-7210 and Robin Pulich

**For details on above trips** see future issues of *The Gull*.

**Trips marked with \$** go to parks or other sites that require an entrance fee.

**Carpooling** arrangements will be attempted for trips marked (\*).

**Problems:** if you need a ride or can take a passenger, or if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, call Russ Wilson, Field Trips Committee Chair (510) 524-2399.

## **BIRDATHON 1995**

**See Birds! Compete for Prizes!  
Raise money for Mono Lake,  
Audubon Adventures and  
Conservation**

**Form a team and become part of  
Birdathon 1995**

*Birdathon* ... the harried and hair-raising effort to see as many species as possible during a specified time-period by individuals and teams of normally sane people who have gathered pledges from friends, relatives and sympathetic strangers in order to raise money for Audubon conservation and education programs.

*April 22 - 23 in honor of John James Audubon's birthday, but precise timing may vary at team discretion*

#### **SEEDY BIRDSEEDERS**

For the GGAS 1995 Birdathon, the Seedy Birdseeders, Jan Andersen, Arthur Feinstein, and Ruth Vose, will be invading the seedy neighborhoods and waterfronts of San Francisco for some virtually real urban birding. You are welcome to join us in covering the waterfront and other urban wilds at their grittiest. We hope, after some intensive birding, to drop into some waterfront jazz clubs and find the new "Bird" blowing on a trumpet. If urban birding is not your cup of birdseed, consider sponsoring the "cool" birdathoners. Our goal is to see 80 species, so we would appreciate a pledge of \$.30 a bird, but of course will accept less. Those who are game to come along, call Arthur at the GGAS office.

#### **MURPHY'S MOB**

Saturday, April 8. Join Dan Murphy at 7 a.m. in the parking lot on Merrie Way, up the hill from the Cliff House. We will bird S.F. hotspots, then head south along the peninsula to try and top 120 species. You need not be present or pledge - just call (510) 843-2222. Or, join us for a day of "birding for bucks." We'll have a countdown at dinner at Celia's. Call Dan at (415) 564-0074 to join the fun.

*Form your own team and do it your way  
... Call Kaori Fujitani for the scoop.  
(415) 664-3654*



# Back Yard Birder

Meg Pauletich

After several glorious, warm days in February I have my first outbreak of poison oak, thanks to King Tutankamen, (Toot, for short), my cat. This morning I noted the dim light and sensed the fog as I lazily noted the clamor of birds already about the business of searching for breakfast. As I opened the drapes, I peered about the natural amphitheater that is my back yard. There was movement everywhere, the bustle of beginning the day for the variety of birds who enjoy various habitats. At the back, behind the see-through fence is wildness: berry bushes, elderberry trees, a tangle of brush where the gray fox family lives. In front of the fence, a group of pine trees, thinned out last year, reaches high in the sky, scattering a blanket of needles beneath. To the right is a handsome teenaged redwood tree nearly touching an old bay. To the left is another bay. In front of a retaining wall is a mixture of vinca minor sporting blue flowers, a few ferns and small shrubs, a large juniper, a plum tree in bloom and rosemary cascading over the retaining wall next to the patio. Something for every bird!

A Steller's Jay splashed noisily in the bird bath, Golden-crowned Sparrows vied for space on the feeder, plaintively crying, "Oh, dear me," as a Plain Titmouse bounced about on the plum tree awaiting his turn for a sunflower seed. Both California and Rufous-sided Towhees attacked the ground beneath their feet, stirring up a melange of bugs and worms. Juncos flashed their white outer tail feathers as they flew up from the ground into the bay. Hey! There's the slate-colored form looking as handsome as any tuxedo-clad gentleman. The Oregon form wears a less formal, brown-backed sport coat, a nice contrast to his black hood. "My" White-throated Sparrow hung around the edges, darting in for a quick bite on the ground before zipping back under cover of the nearby juniper.

A Song Sparrow belted out his "Da, da, da DUM," the opening notes of Beethoven's 5th Symphony. He barely drowned out the jaunty tune of the Bewick's Wren. Sitting above it all in the bay, a Hutton's Vireo got into the act with his monotonous notes droning on and on. The wren scolded him like a buzz saw.

Best of all, there were a half-dozen Varied Thrushes scattered about the yard, practicing their odd songs, reminding me of wheezy concertinas. Without binoculars, their cryptic coloration denied their existence until they moved. How well the disruptive pattern of the slate gray back, broken by the orange wing bars, blends into the background of leaf-litter and pine needles. Even the vivid orange breast with V-shaped black band doesn't stand out as you would expect. Put a Varied Thrush on a green lawn and it would be very noticeable, however. This winter has seen record numbers of these beauties. Kay Loughman told me that on Christmas Count day, Helen Green counted over a hundred of them in Tilden Park! Imagine Varied Thrushes being the "junk" bird of the day instead of jays or T.V.'s. I suppose they will be returning to their N.W. and Canadian breeding ground soon, so I'm feasting my eyes on

them today, along with their cousin the Hermit Thrush, whose liquid "churp" I hear in the underbrush.

Just then, the familiar trill of the Orange-crowned Warbler grabbed my attention. He must be nearly 2 weeks earlier than usual. Can the Pacific Slope Flycatcher be far behind? And I saw Tree Swallows scoping out the bluebird boxes at the Lafayette Reservoir on Sunday.

The distinctive burbling chuckle of a Northern Flicker led me to eyeball him as he dug in the grassy area for ants. How odd it seemed to see this huge woodpecker on the ground. Suddenly he launched himself toward a tree, flashing his white rump. As loud as a cheerleader, he screamed, "Kee-yeer!" A Nuttall's Woodpecker swooped into another pine with a familiar rattle, then began furiously drumming. Guess he was hoping to catch the ear of a female.

Joining the rising chorus were a Wrenit's bouncing ping-pong-ball notes and the "Toot, toot" of a Red-breasted Nuthatch. Goldfinches sighed in the neighbors' birch trees, hanging like golden Christmas ornaments from the branches as they browsed among the catkins.

After my shower, I was struck by the quiet which now reigned in my outdoor theater. Out my kitchen window things were fairly quiet as well; only a few Mourning Doves and a Fox Sparrow on the ground under the feeder. Don't let those sweet-looking doves fool you; they're quite merciless in their quiet way. I saw one viciously attack another whose wing was caught on a juniper branch. "Peaceful dove" is an oxymoron, I guess.

My Spanish lavender plant has attracted a few sparrows who have several inventive ways of harvesting seeds. One hops up to the seed pod, grabbing it in its bill as it pulls it to the ground, using its feet to secure the stem. Aha! Gotcha! Another bird hops up to a seed pod, striking it with its body, scattering seeds on the ground. Different strokes for different folks.

What a luxury it was to spend a few moments enjoying the show. My eyes and ears were filled with the wonders of bird life. Today I was a back yard birder in every sense of the term.

**Note:** In a follow-up to my column of January, 1995, I was pleased to note that Lindsay Museum has been enlisted by the windmill company, Kenetec, to test perch guards that would prevent wild hawks and eagles from perching on the towers.

## KENYA, 1995

*GGAS plans a repeat of last summer's successful trip to Kenya from August 4 to 21, 1995, led again by Kenya's Francis Kitayi and GGAS's Alan Hopkins. The trip features deluxe accommodations, abundant wildlife, both bird and mammal, and visits to many of the major parks in Kenya.*

*Travel arrangements will be made by Park East Tours and the projected cost is \$4,395 which includes round-trip air-fare from San Francisco and a \$200 donation to Golden Gate Audubon. For information on the next safari to Kenya, call Alan at (415) 664-0983, or the GGAS office at (510) 843-2222.*

# Observations: February 7 - March 8

Daniel Singer

## LOONS TO DUCKS

A **Yellow-billed Loon** discovered in Tomales Bay, MRN, near Hamlet on February 19 (KB) was still present through at least March 5 (m.ob.). This individual appears to be an adult in basic plumage based on the lack of conspicuous pale barring on the upperparts and the presence of small white spots on the greater coverts. At least one of Monterey's Yellow-billed Loons remained off the Esplanade on February 16 (BMcK). Of 10 Red-necked Grebe reports, two inland at Clifton Court Forebay, CC, on February 14 (SGI) are notable. The Laysan Albatross continued at the Point Arena Cove, MEN, through March 5 (m.ob.). A Monterey Bay pelagic trip February 16 produced five species of shearwaters including 10 Pink-footeds, one Flesh-footed, seven Short-taileds and one Black-vented (DLSh). This same trip encountered several Northern Fulmars and up to 10 Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels feeding on a dead Elephant Seal 15 miles outside the bay (DLSh). Black-vented Shearwaters were seen in good numbers from Pigeon Point, SM, with 118 on March 4 (RSTh) and 171 on March 6 (PJM).

The **Emperor Goose** at Bodega, SON, was still present through at least March 3 (m.ob.). San Francisco's Tufted Duck was last reported February 28 (AWi); three in Sunnyvale continued through at least February 18 (SCR); Oakland's was still present as of March 7 (LTI), and individuals in Petaluma, SON (DHo), and Benicia, SOL (TEa) were both discovered March 4. Oldsquaws continued to be well reported from coastal and San Francisco Bay sites with possibly six new individuals seen. Of these, one at Borax Lake, LAK, February 10 (JRW) was inland.

## RAPTORS TO ALCIDS

An adult Northern Goshawk west of Boonville, MEN, on March 5 (RLb) must have been a treat to see. This area approaches the southern limit of this species' breeding range in the coastal

mountains. Single Rough-legged Hawks from COL, February 7 (KH), and SOL February 11 (RRe) were only the fourth and fifth reports received this winter, and a likely indicator of the species scarcity in our region this season.

Small wintering flocks of Pacific Golden-Plovers were still present through March 5 at Lawsons Landing, MRN (DSg), and Point Reyes, MRN, February 19 (CLu). A single Rock Sandpiper remained at MacKerricker State Park, MEN, through February 26 (DPo). A Stilt Sandpiper at Merced NWR, MER, on March 4 (CWo) presumably wintered in this area. This species is extremely rare in our region during winter and was only recorded for the first time overwintering a few years ago. A Wilson's Phalarope in Redwood City, SM, March 5 (RSTh) is another very rare winterer. Northern California typically averages about one per winter.

Twenty Pomarine Jaegers were observed from Pigeon Point between February 12 and March 7 (RSTh, PJM, DPo, BMcK). Much less expected is the report of two Parasitic Jaegers from Bodega Head, SON, February 26 (CLu). This species is normally quite rare in our region during the winter months. A Common Black-headed Gull in Redwood City, February 17-18 (RSTh, JM, DHe), was not all that far away from where one was seen last year in SCL. There are 14 or 15 acceptable records for this species in California and, pending acceptance by the CBRC, this constitutes a first for San Mateo. Glaucous Gulls, though seemingly not as numerous as last month, were still well reported. Of course, how many of these individuals are counted repeatedly from different locations is anyone's guess. Good numbers of Black-legged Kittiwakes were seen from sea watches at Pigeon Point throughout the past month. For example, 26 on February 21 (PJM), seven on February 26 (RSTh) and March 7 (BMcK), and 12 on March 4 (DPo); but these numbers pale in comparison to the

2800 seen near Point Pinos, MTY, on the Monterey Bay pelagic trip February 16 (DLSh). This same trip recorded a remarkable 5600 Rhinoceros Auklets in the same area. A Tufted Puffin was seen from Pigeon Point on March 4 (RSTh).

## HUMMINGBIRDS TO SHRIKES

Wintering Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers continued at Davis, YOL, through February 28 (JMHu), and in Milpitas, SCL, through February 26 (SCR). A male Williamson's Sapsucker in Golden Gate Park, SF, February 20 through March 4 (ASH, JM) provided the city with its first record.

An Eastern Phoebe, found at Owl Canyon at Bodega Bay, February 26-27 (CLu, DN), makes a total of four known to be wintering in our region. Individuals in Davis, and Point Reyes Station were still present as of March 4 (EDG, DSg) while the one in San Jose continued through at least February 28 (SCR). The Townsend's Solitaire at Monticello Dam, SOL, lingered until at least February 28 (JMHu) and others were seen along Hwy. 128, YOL, on February 7 (KH), the Stanford campus, SCL, February 10 (SCR) and at Armstrong Redwoods State Reserve, SON, on February 28 (DSh). A Sage Thrasher was at the summit of Skyline Trail at Wildcat Canyon Regional Park, CC, March 4 (BoB). Bohemian Waxwing numbers east of the Sierras gradually diminished during the winter with 15 in Lee Vining, MON, on February 18 the last reported (DN).

## WARBLERS TO FINCHES

Warbler news was practically nonexistent during the month. A singing Orange-crowned Warbler on February 22 in Pacifica, SM (DSg), was early, but not unprecedented. Two Nashville Warblers wintering on the Stanford campus continued through February 27 (SCR).

A female Summer Tanager along San Francisquito Creek in Palo Alto on the SCL/SM border February 14 - March 5 (DSt, AWi) was the only report of this species for the region this winter. A rare-

in-winter Black-headed Grosbeak was seen in Shady Oaks Park in San Jose, SCL, on February 16 (SCR). San Jose's wintering Green-tailed Towhee remained along Coyote Creek through February 26 (SCR) and the Harris' Sparrow west of Crowley Lake, MON, was last reported February 19 (DSh). At least two Chestnut-collared Longspurs were still near the summit of Sierra Road, SCL, as of February 18 (MJM).

A Great-tailed Grackle joined the tourists along Main Street in Tiburon from February 25 through March 5 (GHg, m.ob.) providing Marin with its second county record for the species. An Orchard Oriole at Fort Mason, SF, was seen again February 12 (MMcM). The only Evening Grosbeaks reported hailed from SCL where two were in San Jose February 10 and eight flew over Stanford February 28 (both SCR).

The monthly observation column is generated from reports made to the Northern California Bird Box. Some sightings are unconfirmed and numbers of birds are often best regarded as estimates or "best guesses". In general, birds in boldface are very rare in our region, geographically or seasonally. Many of these are currently reviewed by the California Bird Records Committee (CBRC). Observers are encouraged to provide written and/or photographic documentation to the CBRC, c/o Michael Patten, P.O. Box 51959, Riverside, CA 92517-2959 for any species currently on the review list. A list of review species can also be obtained from the CBRC secretary at the address above.

**Observers:** Dick Ashford, Florence Bennett, Bob Brandriff, Ken Burton, Chris Corben, Jack Dineen, Todd Easterla, Al Eisner, George Finger, Steve Glover, Keith Hansen, Donna Heim, Kevin Hints, David Hoffman, Alan Hopkins, Lisa Hug, George Hugenberg, Joan Humphrey, Nick Lethaby, Rick Lebadour, Cindy Lieurance, Leslie Lieurance, Michael Mammoser, Mac McCormick, Bert McKee, Peter Metropulos, Joe Morlan, Dan Nelson, David Powell, Rick Renaud, Mike Rogers, Steve Rottenborn, Barry Sauppe, Don Schmoldt, Doug Shaw, Debra L. Shearwater, Dan Singer, Rich Stallcup, Ron Thorn, Dorothy Tobkin, Jerry White, Alan Wight, Denise Wight, Adam Winer, Claire Wolfe. Data thanks to Joe Morlan and the Northern California Bird Box.

**Abbreviations for counties:** CC, Contra Costa; COL, Colusa; LAK, Lake; MEN, Mendocino; MER, Merced; MON, Mono; MRN, Marin; MTY, Monterey; SCL, Santa Clara; SF, San Francisco; SM, San Mateo; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; YOL, Yolo

## ATTENTION BUSY PEOPLE

I often hear the comment, "I would love to help [GGAS with its activities], but I have such a demanding job..." Frankly, the only people I know who *don't* have demanding jobs are luckily retired or (unluckily) looking for work. But we all know that if you want things done, you ask a busy person because busy people know how to organize their lives to accomplish things, even when it seems that even *one more task* will be the last straw.

We are asking one of you busy people out there to consider taking on another activity -- one that is fun, rewarding, undemanding, but that we are in dire need of filling: Hospitality Committee Chair. This mainly entails helping to host at the monthly general meeting, or finding people to do this, and organizing the provision of refreshments. Sound easy? It is! And perfect for an outgoing, people-loving person. We know you're out there! Don't wait for someone else to volunteer -- be the first one on your block!

Of course, even if you aren't busy or don't have a demanding job, we'd like you also to consider taking on this opportunity to learn more about the inner workings of GGAS and to participate! If you are interested, please call the office and tell Arthur or call one of the board members listed on the back of the *Gull*.

*Janice Andersen, President*

### BIRDING CLASS IN S.F. INTRODUCTION TO AVIAN FIELD I.D. AND HABITATS OF CENTRAL COASTAL CALIFORNIA

with Dan Murphy

4 lectures, Thursdays, April 20--May 11,  
7:00--9:00 p.m.

3 field trips, Saturdays, April 22-- May 6,  
8:00--11:00 a.m.

This class will focus on field identification of migratory and nesting species of the San Francisco Peninsula. The class will include 3 field trips and 4 slide-enhanced lectures. We will discuss various Bay Area habitats for both migrants and nesting species. Lectures will be held at the California Academy of Sciences in Golden Gate Park. Cost is \$110 for Academy and Audubon Society members. Academic credit is available through San Francisco State University for an additional \$35. For more information or to register, call the Adult Education Dept. of the CAS at (415) 750-7100.

## CALENDAR

**Monday, April 3:** San Francisco Conservation Committee. 7:30 p.m.. Call office for location.

**Monday, April 10:** East Bay Conservation Committee, GGAS Office. 7:30 p.m.

**Thursday, April 14:** General Meeting: Steve Howell and Sophie Webb talking on the birds of Chile and signing their new book, 7:30 p.m., Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda, Berkeley (*see back page*)

**Monday, April 17:** Panama Committee, 76 Hillcrest Rd, Berkeley, 7:30 p.m. Call Miles McKey at (510) 652-5854 with questions (*see p. 33*)

**Saturday/Sunday, April 22/23:** Birdathon (*see page 40*)

**Monday, April 24:** Board of Directors, GGAS office, 7:30 p.m.

**April Meeting: Steve Howell, Sophie Webb and The Birds of Chile**  
**plus a special book-signing**  
**Thursday, April 13, 1995**  
**Northbrae Community Church**  
**941 The Alameda**  
**Berkeley**  
**7:30 p.m.**

We are pleased to announce that *A Guide to the Birds of Mexico and Northern Central America*, long in the works, has finally been published! We are fortunate to have scheduled the evening of April 13 with author Steven Howell and artist Sophie Webb, during which they'll present a slide show and talk on the avifauna of Chile as well as sign copies of their brand-new book.

Many Golden Gate members will recognize Steve and Sophie's names through their long association with GGAS and the Point Reyes Bird Observatory. Steve has led a number of GGAS tours to Mexico, while Sophie has designed several Birdathon t-shirts for us, and has contributed paintings to our art auction. The two met at PRBO's Palomarin field station 12 years ago. Since then Bolinas has been their home base and they have remained as PRBO Research Associates while making trips from the top to the bottom of the world, doing field work from Alaska to Antarctica and points in between. Their names appear frequently in ornithological journals in connection with unusual observations of birds in Central America.

Several years ago, immediately after delivering the completed manuscript and plates of their book to Oxford University Press, Steve and Sophie headed off to Chile for a well-deserved holiday. Of course, for these two ornithologists, that meant travelling the length of the country and exploring the Pacific's waters off Chile's coast, trying to see everything that moved.

Chile is a long and slender strip of land, 150 miles wide by 2500 miles long, ranging from sea-level to 20,000 feet elevation, and combining spectacular scenery with an incredible variety of land forms and bioregions. Steve and Sophie could not help but notice the similarities of climate, vegetation and topography, as well as convergent evolution, between northern and southern hemispheres. The avifauna ranges from penguins, rheas, flamingoes, and an amazing collection of southern shorebirds and waterfowl to 30 species of Furnariids (ovenbirds), 8 tapaculos, and numerous siskins and sierra-finches. Using their own photographs, our speakers will take us on a tour through Chile which will be the equivalent of travelling from southern Alaska to southern Mexico.

We hope you will bring your birdwatching friends and join us for an engaging evening with Steve Howell and Sophie Webb. Copies of their hot-off-the-press new field guide will be available for sale and signing (paperbacks \$35, hardbacks \$75, plus tax).

**Save the Date: May 11 in Berkeley. Bob Stewart, well-known and popular Marin County naturalist, on Butterflies of the Bay Area and Costa Rica**

**ROSTER**

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**Northern California Bird Box**  
**(510) 524-5592**  
**Weekly Rare Bird Summary**  
**(415) 738-1499**

5 species of loon have been seen in California

Published each month except August by the Golden Gate Audubon Society. Special third-class postage paid in Oakland, CA.

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**Golden Gate Audubon Society**  
**2530 San Pablo Avenue**  
**Suite G**  
**Berkeley, California 94702**  
**Phone: (510) 843-2222**  
**Fax: (510) 843-5351**

Office Hours:  
Tues.- Fri. 9-12, 1-4

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

As a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically enrolled in the local chapter, Golden Gate Audubon Society. Chapter benefits include receipt of *The Gull*, access to field trips and programs, and the opportunity to volunteer. Call the office if you have any questions.

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